

Remarks

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Final Office Action mailed September 14, 2006. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims and respectfully provide the following remarks.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that Claims 2, 5, 13, 21, 31, 40, 45, and 49 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. (*See* Office Action, Page 2) Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.104, Applicants respectfully issue a statement commenting on the Examiner's reasons for allowance. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's reasons for allowance to the extent that they are inconsistent with applicable case law, statutes, and regulations. Furthermore, Applicants do not admit to any characterization or limitation of the claims or to any characterization of a reference by the Examiner, particularly any that are inconsistent with the language of the claims considered in their entirety and including all of their constituent limitations.

Applicants believe all claims are allowable without amendment. For example, Applicants maintain that each of Applicants' independent claims, and therefore their dependent claims, are allowable for at least those reasons discussed in the previous Response, and reserve the right to pursue claims of the same or similar scope in a continuation application. However, to expedite issuance of a patent from this Application, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 12, 20, 30, 38, 43, and 48 to include limitations similar to those from dependent Claims 2, 13, 21, 31, 40, 45, and 49, respectively, which the Examiner identified as allowable. Applicants have also canceled Claims 2, 13, 21, 31, 40, 45, and 49 without prejudice or disclaimer, and have amended dependent Claims 14, 32, and 50 to adjust their dependencies in light of the amendments to the independent claims and the cancellation of Claims 13, 31, and 49.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of independent Claims 1, 12, 20, 30, 38, 43, and 48 and their dependent claims.

II. No Waiver

All of Applicants' arguments and amendments are without prejudice or disclaimer. Additionally, by not responding to additional statements made by the Examiner, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Examiner's additional statements.

Conclusion

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending claims.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this case in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact Chad D. Terrell, Attorney for Applicants, at the Examiner's convenience at (214) 953-6813.

Applicants believe no fees are due. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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